

Center for Excellence in Rural Safety



Isanti County Partnership

www.ruralsafety.umn.edu

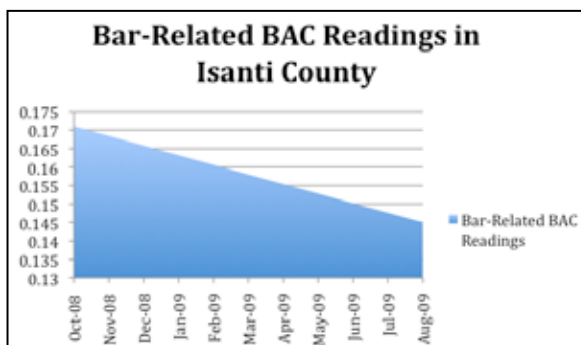
Isanti County, Minnesota, has become a national model in rural transportation safety, known especially for implementing innovative and effective solutions for drunk driving. A partnership with the University of Minnesota Center of Excellence in Rural Safety (CERS), which began in October 2008, has further strengthened efforts to improve the overall safety on the county's rural roads, recently plagued with serious alcohol-related crashes. The partnership involves initiatives such as SafeCab and staggered jail sentencing. Isanti County Judge James E. Dehn has led the creation of these and other innovative tactics to prevent drunk driving and crack down on repeat offenders.



Judge James E. Dehn

Staggered Sentencing

Staggered sentencing breaks up a convicted individual's jail sentence into different periods of time. An offender serves jail time for short periods of time over the span of several years. The offender, when not in jail, is able to file a motion that would grant forgiveness from the court for their next jail sentence. Giving offenders more control over their sentences provides more of an incentive for them to refrain from illegal activities. In addition, the court system monitors the offender for the duration of the sentence, and the court clearly describes to the offender the consequences of being involved in another DWI-related incident. According to a January 2003 Minnesota House research study, staggered sentencing reduces recidivism by 50 percent. A final report about national research on staggered sentencing conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will be published soon.



SafeCab

The Isanti County SafeCab program offers rides home to patrons of participating bars and restaurants after an evening of drinking. Drivers return at a later time, presumably sober, to retrieve vehicles left in the parking lots of participating establishments. The program does not provide rides to or between bars. Rides began in 2005. An estimated 50 percent of the bars in Isanti County participate in the SafeCab program, and in 2009, 726 rides were given to 1,347 people. In 2009, the SafeCab program created a nonprofit charitable corporation called the Minnesota Safe Ride board.

SafeCab fast facts:

- 11% decrease in bar-related DWIs (62% to 51%)
- 15% decrease in bar-related BAC readings (.171 to .145)
- Average cost per ride: \$11.39
- Average cost per rider: \$6.48
- Number of rides given: 3,000 (since program began in December 2005)
- Number of riders: 5,200 (since program began in December 2005)
- 33% decrease in DWIs county-wide
- 65% decrease in DWIs from bars using SafeCab

Contact

CERS Director
Lee Munnich
 612-625-7357
lmunnich@umn.edu

Isanti County Courts
Judge James E. Dehn
 763-689-2292
james.dehn@courts.state.mn.us

Isanti County TZD Program Coordinator
Robert Bollenbeck
 320-679-4065
robert.bollenbeck@ecrdc.org

SafeRoadMaps

As a result of the CERS partnership, Isanti County has customized the CERS crash-mapping tool SafeRoadMaps (SafeRoadMaps.org) to identify key details about each crash in the county, thus facilitating improved response to problem areas. The tool allows users to view crashes at a national level, a state level, a community level, and a road-specific level.

SafeRoadMaps provides details such as whether the driver was wearing a seatbelt, drinking, or speeding. The tool also notes which life-saving public policies, such as strong seat belt laws, are being employed in the chosen area.

SafeRoadMaps has registered millions of hits since being unveiled in July 2008. The site has attracted international media attention and is being used in a variety of ways to educate the public about road fatalities.



Teen Driver Safety Forum

Crashes in spring 2010 involving young drivers claimed several lives in Minnesota, and these tragedies left parents, teens, and communities asking what they can do to avoid more deaths and serious injuries.

In response, U.S. Rep. James Oberstar and transportation safety experts held a forum June 4, 2010, to discuss with community members and safety advocates ways to address the safety challenges presented by teen drivers. The forum, cosponsored by CERS, was held in Cambridge, Minnesota—only a mile from the scene of a horrific crash that killed six, including four teens, in April.

Isanti County Judge James Dehn moderated the forum, which also featured a presentation by CERS director Lee Munnich. Oberstar and the others introduced and solicited feedback on potentially life-saving new policies, research, and technolo-

gies, and they called on parents to take the lead in holding their children accountable. The forum also included several comments from safety advocates, educators, and parents.



About the Center for Excellence in Rural Safety

The Center for Excellence in Rural Safety (CERS) facilitates citizen-centered research, training, and outreach activities related to rural transportation safety. The Center's research activities explore policy, behavior, and technology innovations through projects addressing safety-conscious planning, ITS and rural emergency response,

integrated policy approaches, and related human factors, societal trends, and stakeholder needs analysis. The Center is a joint program between the State and Local Policy Program at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and the Center for Transportation Studies, both at the University of Minnesota, and sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration.

Contact

Director
Lee Munnich
612-625-7357
lmunnich@umn.edu

Research Director
Thomas A. Horan
612-276-2745
tom.horan@cgu.edu

Program Delivery Director
Gina Baas
612-626-7331
baasx001@umn.edu

Policy Director
Barb Rohde
202-833-5575
rohde006@umn.edu

Assistant Director
Frank Douma
612-626-9946
douma002@umn.edu